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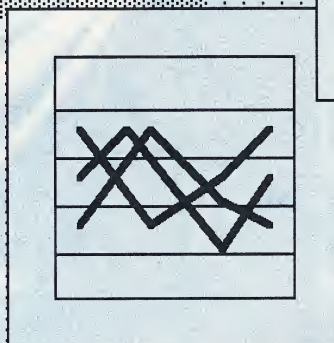
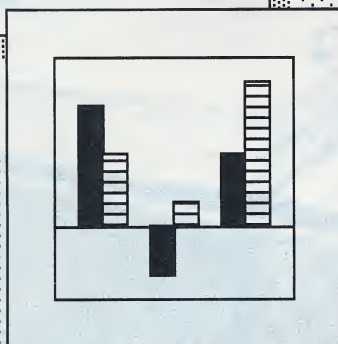
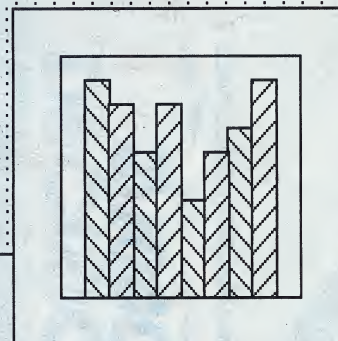
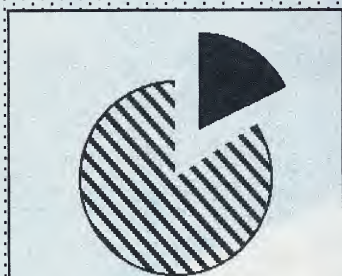
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PRODUCT PROFILES

News And Information For Pick™ Operating System Users

Issue Number 4

July 1984



Some Thoughts On Pick's Future

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Some Thoughts On Pick's Future

The May issue of *Pragma's Product Profiles* featured a survey of hardware that supports the Pick operating system. The survey included a census of the number of systems installed by all vendors.

Comparing the results with a similar survey done a year earlier in the May 1983 *Pragma* reveals one especially interesting statistic: all thirteen hardware vendors together managed to sell a total of about 4,000 Pick machines during the year between the two surveys.

Four thousand units in one year is not a particularly impressive number, especially when reports of hundreds of thousands of microcomputer shipments *per month* by vendors such as IBM and Apple are now common.

Just how well is the Pick operating system doing? Is it just a matter of time before Pick is buried alive by the avalanche of microcomputers and well-publicized operating systems such as MS-DOS and Unix? Or is Pick doing relatively well in its market? Does Pick still have a bright future? Just what is the future of the Pick operating system?

Those were some of the questions we discussed with a variety of Pick hardware and software vendors during the past month. One of our more interesting conversations was with Steve Setzman of Automation Technology, a well known Pick software house in Pennsylvania. What follow are portions of that conversation.

Setzman: It strikes me that the comparison to micros is invalid. Pick is a multi-user system. The only place to judge Pick's penetration is in a comparison to other mini systems. Pick's greatest strength is on the super micros, and the window for those

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machines is just starting to open. End users are not really certain where the super micros fit yet, in between the micro and the mini world. As the penetration of the super micros increases, we're going to see a dramatic increase in the percentage of that market for Pick. The IBM PC-XT implementation by Pick will be a significant factor and will increase market recognition.

Pragma: But in the mean time, many PC's have already been sold with other operating systems...

Setzman: But those aren't relational databases. They're not in a league with Pick. MS-DOS and PC-DOS and Xenix are single user, not multi-user, operating systems, so I don't think it's fair to compare them with Pick. It strikes me that Pick's penetration is quite good, when you examine the advertising budget that has been applied to developing that penetration.

Pragma: Where do you think Pick will be by

the end of this year?

Setzman: I'm being told by Pick Systems that they have a \$1.7 million advertising budget. If that is for real, and they go that route, then you will see a dramatic upsurge by the end of 1984, and extremely substantial penetration and recognition increases in 1985. The changes that have occurred at Pick Systems over the past twelve months have been extremely positive. IBM is expressing a lot of interest in Pick. We have some contact with some of the people in Boca Raton [a major IBM development location] on some other matters, and they constantly inquire about Pick. We're starting to hear about Pick from a lot of organizations. The Fortune 100, where we do consulting work, are starting to ask questions: "What is this Pick stuff? Do you know anything about it?"

Pragma: What market share do you think Pick will end up with?

Setzman: You could see Pick on 40% or 50% of the super micros that are sold in 1985.

Pragma: Just what is your definition of a super micro?

Setzman: A typical super micro would be anything based on the Motorola 68000, with a multi-user operating system and substantial hard disk above the ten megabytes that you can stick on an XT, for instance.

Pragma: Many vendors have 68000's now, but they're priced high above a typical PC.

Setzman: That is true to an extent. You've just seen a major price reduction announced by General Automation, and I think you'll see

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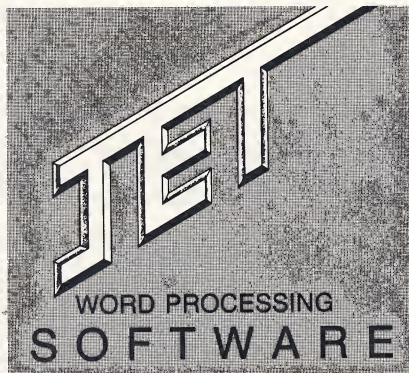
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all the competition adjusting equitably.

Pragma: Are significant super micro price reductions necessary to enable Pick to succeed in the marketplace?

Setzman: It's not an easy question to answer, but if I had to I'd say "yes". There has to be about a 25% cut in the cost. You need a product that bridges comfortably from what people perceive as the high end of the desktop micro up to the small minis. In order to bridge that gap, you can't have a jump from an \$8,000 IBM PC-XT up to a \$12,000 Pertec or GA or Datamedia or Climax.

Pragma: It's hard for customers to find out what Pick really is. Is \$1.7 million going to do that? Will ads really educate people about Pick?

Setzman: No, it's going to be a slow progression. You saw IBM blessing the relational database about a year and a half

ago, and that helps. As the mainframe world and the mini world become more aware of Pick, it helps because it's a kind of trickle down. You take users off a mainframe and put them on MS-DOS and they laugh about how horrible it is, how frustrating it is to try to work with. You take them off a mainframe and you put them onto Pick and they go "wow, this is really friendly". I'm talking about end users, typically. Programmers may have a very different attitude. One of the major limitations you have impacting technical people is DATA/BASIC. They want other high level languages. COBOL is a big need now. You have to consider C as a big need. It's not something that can happen overnight. The necessary steps are the true implementation of the bulk of Open Architecture as Pick described it at the last convention. That would give us a lot of things like enhanced communications capabilities, and the ability to run COBOL and C under Pick.



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Pragma: Is Open Architecture necessary for Pick to succeed?

Setzman: No, Pick can continue to grow on a slightly enhanced basis from where it is now. If the figure is four thousand new systems last year, you'll probably see six or eight this year, and maybe ten or twelve next year.

...

Dennis Brown of CDI Information Systems in Washington, the home of the Series/1 Pick implementation, is another vendor with whom we discussed the future of Pick.

Brown: Open Architecture is very important to the success of Pick. Our staff is working very closely with Pick on its development. We've got some neat things already developed that we're going to put back into the current version of Pick. Such as when you're doing a file save to a reel of tape and you run out of room on the tape, you can automatically go to a second tape drive. We're doing a lot of work on the disk and the tape area for Pick. Open Architecture is going to solve a lot of the problems that we're having right now with credibility. You know, the operating system's been stagnant for some time. Pick is going to solve those problems with Open Architecture.

Pragma: What kind of problems do you mean?

Brown: Just the perception that the operating system has been particularly weak in such things as communications, which Open Architecture will give us a much better basis to do. We have interactive bisync available on the Series/1. It's probably the best communications on Pick that's out there, but we're still talking bisync, and most operating systems support more sophisticated communications than that.

Pragma: So the success of Pick hinges on it becoming functionally better?

Brown: Pick has not had major enhancements in some years. Open Architecture is going to give it those major enhancements. I still think Pick is the best interactive database operating system in existence, but we're not

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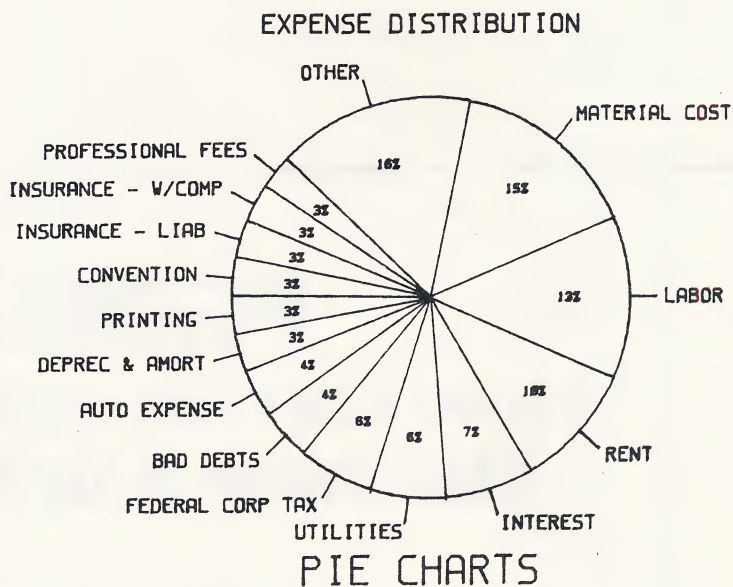
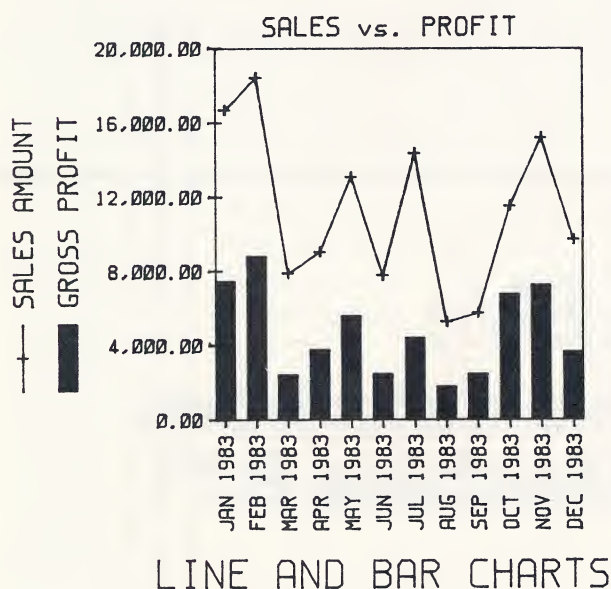
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perceived as making advancements. Open Architecture will add a lot of credibility.

Pragma: When will the impact of these improvements be felt?

Brown: Later this year, third quarter, fourth quarter. Anything this complex, this good, is going to encounter some problems. We and Pick have had some problems, and we're going to miss a few deadlines, a few dates that we wanted to make. We wanted to make it fully available this summer. It looks like we'll slip maybe three or four months on it. Which means we're going to be in the third or fourth quarter before Open Architecture is really something that somebody is going to be using out in the field.

Pragma: Will Pick ever be as commonplace as Unix?

Brown: I'm not sure it's ever going to be in that class, because you've got AT&T backing

Unix, and whether we like it or not, we're going to have to face the fact that Unix is becoming the de facto standard. But that doesn't mean that it's going to be the only operating system sold. Pick does not have to be as dominant as Unix to be very successful. This year you'll see a doubling of the numbers that were quoted for sales in the whole Pick community last year. You'll see a doubling of that number every year. However, I saw some rather distressing surveys recently which said that minicomputer industry sales are going to be flat over the next three or four years.

Pragma: Have you really found Unix to be a competitor in your sales?

Brown: I can't think of a single case where we were head to head where we really lost. The problem is that Unix is becoming a standard with so many systems houses and so many applications developers, that you see all

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this neat application code being developed for Unix. I don't think that we've felt the effect of Unix yet. 1985 is going to be Unix's year. If we don't have Open Architecture for 1985, it won't really matter if our underlying operating system is better.

Pragma: Why is Unix so popular with systems houses?

Brown: Universities have been using it, and the kids are getting out now. Pick is not a household word. Those of us who are devotees like it, want to use it, and don't ever want to use anything else, but for every one of us there are about two hundred others who know of Unix. It doesn't really matter anymore whether something is better or not. It's how it's being perceived in the marketplace. Pick got a lot of publicity and notoriety in the last six months in particular, but it's nothing compared to Unix. The average person developing systems software

right now is convinced that Unix is going to be a winner, therefore they put their money behind Unix. You don't have that same kind of commitment for Pick.

Pragma: Adding more functionality isn't necessarily going to make Pick more well known.

Brown: No, it won't solve that particular problem. Our product has to be vastly superior in order to beat the product of choice. Open Architecture is going to do that, but even then I'm saying that we will not have the same market share that Unix is going to have. Δ

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Latest Reports From Local User Groups

New England: Recently, *Pragma* received the latest issue of the newsletter from the New England Reality Users Group (NERU). The May issue, edited by Jeanne Comeau, included explanations of common Editor error messages and a short program for processing time cards. This group's meeting in May featured guest speaker Cyrus Radford of Datek discussing programming structure and efficiency. A special gathering called NERU '84 is being planned for October 11th and 12th. For more information on that special event, contact Valerie Zucko at The Rockport Company, 72 Howe Street, Marlboro, MA 01752 or phone 617-485-2090. Information on general meetings can be obtained by writing to Norman Kaufman, NERU, Box 339,

Cambridge, MA 02141.

Virginia: Last month saw the first meeting of the newly formed Richmond Area Pick User Group (RAPUG). The purpose of RAPUG is "to keep Pick users informed in areas that relate to their system". The initial meeting began with a presentation on the history of Pick and was followed by a discussion on what the members want to see in future meetings. For more information on becoming a RAPUG member, write to Joanna Woodle, MDS Corporation, 905 Southlake Blvd., Richmond, VA 23236 or call 804-794-2818.

Arizona: The April meeting of the Pick Users Group of Arizona featured an educational session by Dave Fischer on utilities and undocumented features. Dave also discussed office automation and distributed a proc to edit, compile, catalog and execute a program. George Bosselman led discussions of the IBM

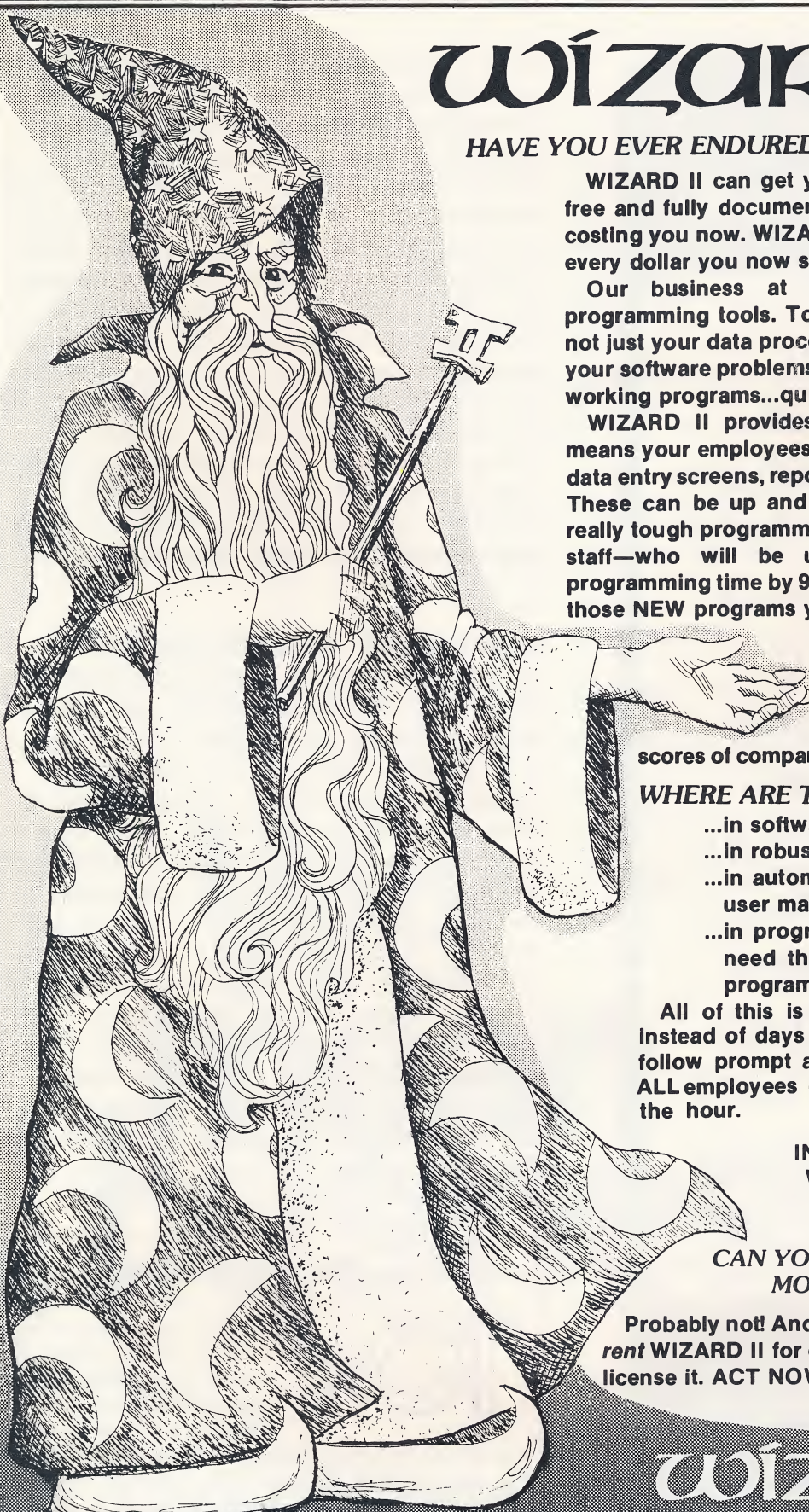
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PC-XT implementation and on data communications and networking. The May meeting included an educational session by Larry Beazer on dictionaries, particularly differences between Microdata and other Pick machines. The June educational session by Jim Tyron was on ENGLISH. The July 19th meeting will include elections and a session by Dave Fischer on proc. Communications with the IBM PC as well as a comparison of the Mentor and Zebra operating systems will be the topics of discussion at the August 17th session, led by Rick Bonafasi. Users interested in more information about the Pick Users Group of Arizona should write to Secretary Jodi Hilgenberg at Communication Skill Builders, Box 42050, Tucson, AZ 85733 or telephone 602-323-7500.

Washington DC: Of all the users who attended the National Capital Area Pick Users Group (NCAPUG) April meeting, Ed Colainni was undoubtedly the happiest, walking away with the door prize of a one week trip to Jamaica. A presentation at that meeting by Medical Data Services covered conversions to Pick machines, and included price comparisons and an actual conversion demo on a Zebra. The month of May brought both the regular meeting, featuring a presentation by Bantam of their Shell software, as well as NCAPUG's first educational seminar a week later. The topic at June's meeting was interfacing the Revelation software to Reality and Sequel machines. For more information, write to the new NCAPUG mailing address at 1350 Beverly Road, Suite 115-241, McLean, VA 22101 or call Stan Seidlitz at 703-354-4711.

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Delaware Valley: Newsletter #13 of the Delaware Valley Data Base Management Association reported on that group's May meeting, which was hosted by Microdata and featured displays of that company's M-1000 hardware and Natural, All, and Real-Cal software. The June meeting offered a presentation by Harold Williams of CRS on Pertec's Sabre machine. For more information on joining this group when meetings resume in September, write to Secretary/Treasurer Judi Paslawski at DVDBMA, Box 374, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

Southern California: The California Data Base Management Association (CDBMA) gathering of 70 users in May enjoyed a presentation on the Pick XT and Cosmos Revelation implementations for the IBM PC. The June meeting featured speaker Mike Rosetti of DigiCorp demonstrating the ScreenPlay software, and the technical session that month was on new Pick licensee Tau/Sumicom. This month's meeting at San Diego State University

on July 18th will be an "outdoor extravaganza" with a Hawaiian theme, luau included. Attendees will enjoy a hosted bar, dancing under the stars, Don Ho and Tom Selleck look-alikes, and a special speaker. For more information on this and future activities, contact Willie Timmons at Data Cache, 7822 Convoy Court, San Diego, CA 92111 or call 619-292-4707.

Colorado: Spreadsheets were the topic of conversation at the Colorado Pick Users (CPU) May technical session, presented by Diane Norman of NCAR. Scott Marshall discussed dictionaries at the CPU technical session in June, with emphasis on special control breaks, averages and totals, unusual formats, and miscellaneous useful tips. Pick users interested in becoming CPU members should contact Secretary Bill Ehlert by calling 303-790-1870 or writing to Box 3154, Denver, CO 80201.

Northern California: The Northern California Pick Users (NCPU) April meeting featured a presentation by Mike Sibley of Climax Corporation on "compatible color graphics terminals for Pick systems", after a showing of the ubiquitous video tape on Open Architecture. The popular \$20 seminar on "DATA/BASIC for Dummies" was held in June, and this month's meeting is scheduled to be held in Oakland. For more information about the NCPU, write to Secretary Jerry Robinson at 17 Coleridge Street, San Francisco, CA 94110. Δ

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ACCU/PLOT Device Support Grows

Mike Schellenbach, Director of Marketing at AccuSoft Enterprises, has dropped us a note explaining that they have added a "vector device" driver program to their ACCU/PLOT-II graphics software. The vector driver is designed to interface ACCU/PLOT with pen plotters and line-drawing CRTs. As of the

Unlock The Secrets In Your Computer!

Pragma is a 48-page journal for Pick users published quarterly from August 1982 through February 1984. Each issue is packed with software and helpful information, including complete and debugged program listings and detailed, explanatory articles for readers at all levels of experience. Order your issues today and begin unlocking the secrets in your Pick system!

Pragma #1, August 1982: Welcome to Pragma • ZIP Code File Design • A Program for Renumbering Statement Labels • Deriving Year-to-Date Counts • VANILLA, The No-Frills Manufacturing System: The Parts File • Moletron User Profile • More Memory, Fewer Reads • SYSMAP: A Cross-Reference System • How to Flag Missing Checks • 23 Wish List Items • Computing Modules with ENGLISH® • Building ENGLISH Headings with Proc • 4 Queries • Making Item Identifiers Hash Well • Tape Handling • Patching the Exit Problem in 3.2 SCREENPRO(TM) • The Shell Game.

Pragma #2, November 1982: We Have Liftoff • A Modulo Setting Program • Black Box Formatting • TRIM, DELIM and PROFILE Utilities • SYSMAP, A Cross-Reference System: File Format Input • Galsinski Hamburg User Profile • LOOP vs. LOCATE Benchmarks • 25 Wish List Items • An Introduction to ENGLISH: Jargon • Proc Conversions • VANILLA, The No-Frills Manufacturing System: Bill of Material Input • 14 Queries • The Trouble Tree • 2 Letters • A Switchbox for 32 Ports • Security and the DATA/BASIC(TM) Programmer • The Cookie Game • Some New Subscribers.

Pragma #3, February 1983: Is Pragma a Rare Medium, Well Done? • Edit Aides • A Proc for Cross-Referencing Q-Pointers • SYSMAP, A Cross-Reference System: Remaining File Input • Rainbow Natural Foods User Profile • More BASIC Benchmark Comparisons • Justifying Ragged Output • 13 Wish List Items • Generating Monthly Column Headings • VANILLA, The No-Frills Manufacturing System: Purchasing • 5 Queries • An Introduction to ENGLISH: More Commands • Shared Site Checklist • Converting Point to Programs • 3 Letters • Generating Blank Forms • Animal, A Game that Learns • More New Subscribers.

Pragma #4, May 1983: Survey Says... • Pacific Valley Bank User Profile • SYSMAP, A Cross-Reference System: Dicts and Procs • Uncompiling: Unassembling Stack Code • Left vs. Right Justification Benchmarks • 4 Wish List Items • A Comparison of BASIC Implementations • More New Subscribers • An Undocumented Editor Capability • 3 Local User Group Reports • Avoiding Saved Lists with PQ-RESELECT • Self-Documenting Reports • A Query • A Survey of Hardware that Supports Pick-Style Software • Printer Trade-Offs • An Introduction to ENGLISH: Finding files • A Letter • VANILLA, The No-Frills Manufacturing System: Purchase Order Entry • The Swat! Game.

Pragma #5, August 1983: Happy Birthday! • Interactive Systems Producer Profile • Uncompiling: Regenerating Source Code • A Day of Revelation • IBM Personal Computer vs. Microdata(TM) Reality® Benchmarks • VANILLA, The No-Frills Manufacturing System: Receiving • 3 Wish List Items • An Introduction to ENGLISH: Being Choosy • Converting Manual Paint to Programs • 6 Local User Group Reports • More New Subscribers • A Program that Reports File Pointer Locations • Boiler Plate Processing with Runoff(TM) • A New Query and an Old Query Answered • SYSMAP, A Cross-Reference System: Automation • Tape Types • 6 Letters • Permuted Index to the First Four Issues of Pragma • Amazing, a Maze Game.

Pragma #6, November 1983: Pick Pie Pictured • The Ubiquitous POINTER-FILE • Uncompiling: Resolving Labels • An Introduction to ENGLISH: Syntax Overview • AccuSoft Producer Profile • Rounding Out 7 Benchmarks On 5 Machines • Designing Data Entry Programs • 12 Wish List Items • GET: An Input Processor • 5 Local User Group Reports • More New Subscribers • Do You Know Your Proc Limits? • VANILLA, The No-Frills Manufacturing System: Inspection • 2 Queries • Individual Accounts or Shared Accounts? • Lock Logic Illustrated • Password Protection • Two Undocumented Conversions • A Letter • How AMAZING Works.

Pragma #7, February 1984: More New Subscribers • A New Machine Visits Pragma • Bantam Hardware Overview • Suppressing LOCKED Clauses • An Introduction to ENGLISH: WITH, BY and TOTAL • Bantam Producer Profile • VANILLA, The No-Frills Manufacturing System: Disposition • A Bantam Diary • New Benchmark Timings For 8 More Machines • 6 Local User Group Reports • GET: Source Code • A Preprocessor for Symbolic Statement Labels • 2 Wish List Items • 3 Queries • Bantam Software Overview • A Letter • The Slide Game.

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first of August, ACCU/PLOT will be packaged
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system to support any type of output device.
Contact AccuSoft by writing to 8043 Foothill
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Speaking Of Graphics Systems...

Digi-Logic Systems has also announced the
addition of support for more devices
(specifically, the Intecolor 2427 and CIE 467
color graphics terminals and the Dataproducts
P132 and Trilog Colorplot color printers) for
their Pick-A-Plot graphics software for Pick
systems. Pick-A-Plot is menu driven, written
entirely in DATA/BASIC, uses the Tektronix
40XX graphics protocols, and carries a \$1,195
price tag. Contact Digi-Logic at 3253 Ridge
Road, Lansing, IL 60438. Their phone number
is 312-474-7445. Δ

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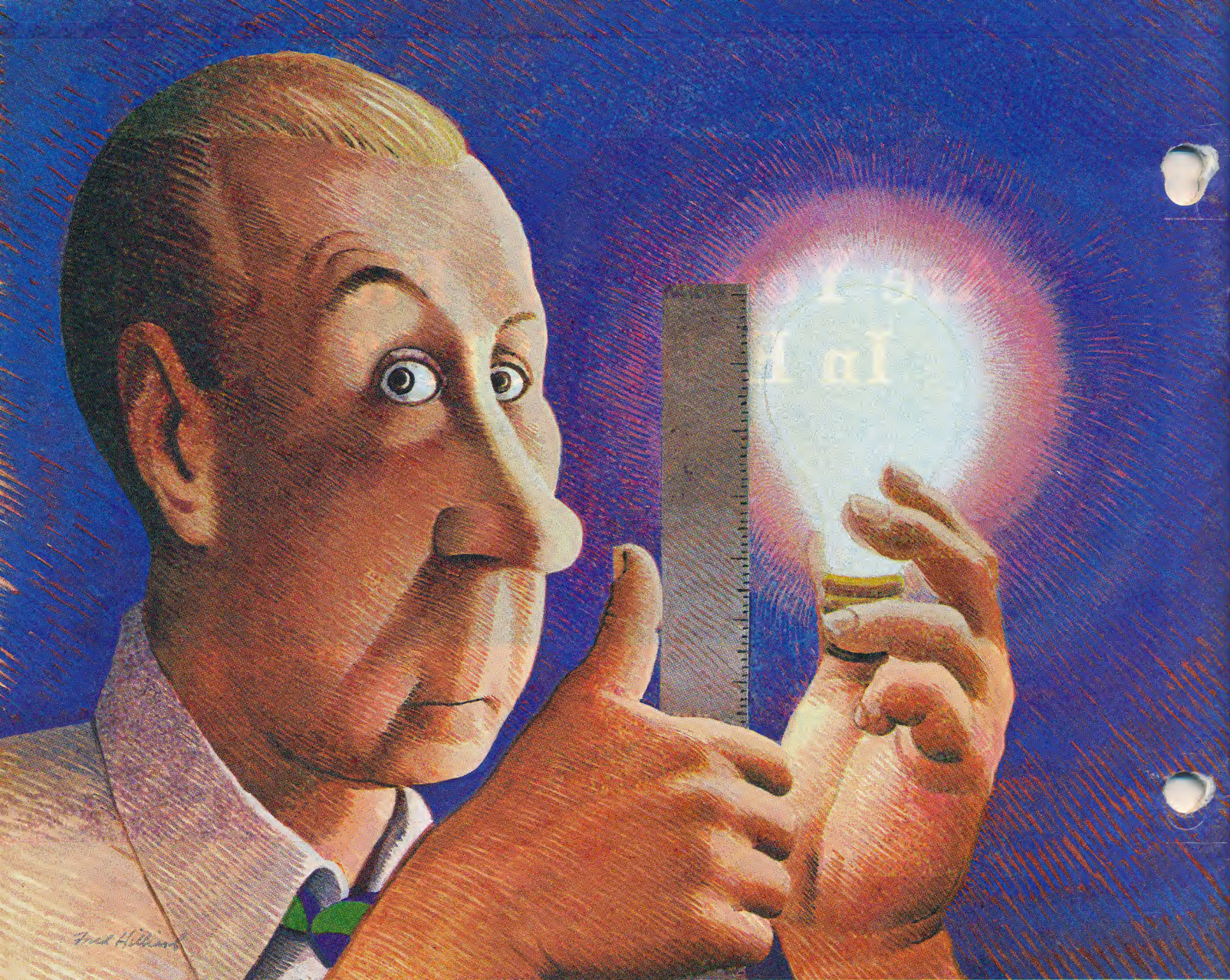
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